



Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter

It's finally December now, the last month of this year, and maybe a busy time for all of you. We present to you Issue 12 of the Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter.

In response to the formulation of the “Basic Policy on Sexual Orientation and Gender identity at Osaka University”, the “Anti-Harassment Policy of Osaka University” has been revised.

Osaka University has issued the “Basic Policy on Sexual Orientation and Gender identity at Osaka University”. Through this policy recognizing diversity and rights regarding “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” for all of its members (students and faculty), Osaka is a pioneer among national universities, fighting to eliminate discrimination and prejudice and conducting awareness-raising activities. ↓

http://www.danjo.osaka-u.ac.jp/en_lp/

Until now, the Harassment Counseling Office has been consulted on a wide range of issues including “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”, but with the formulation of the “Basic Policy on Sexual Orientation and Gender identity at Osaka University”, we have found a need to redefine our policy.

○ Anti-Harassment Policy of Osaka University (Revised, excerpt)

*Additions are underlined

This policy is designed to clarify Osaka University's (hereafter referred to as the University) approach to maintaining a favorable education, research, and work environment through its methods against preventing harassment and its approach to resolving problems caused by it. The University hereby wishes to communicate its official position for the better knowledge of all its University members and affiliates.

1. Definition of harassment

The term “harassment” as used herein shall mean “sexual harassment”, “pregnancy, birth, and childcare related harassment”, “academic harassment”, and “power harassment”, as defined in the articles below.

Sexual harassment means any unwanted sexual comment or behavior (including actions or behavior based on sexual interests or desires, or based on prejudices concerning gender roles, sexual orientation, or gender identity) made by taking advantage of a person's relationship with another person regarding professional duties, research, study, or extracurricular activities, regardless of when and where such comment or behavior takes place. Sexual harassment also occurs when the environment of any individual pursuing professional duties, research, study, or extracurricular activities is damaged as a result of the offender's behavior, and also when any advantage or disadvantage is caused to the individual depending on his/her reaction to the offender's sexual comment or behavior mentioned above.

Whether any comment or behavior is considered as sexual harassment depends basically on whether the recipient of such comment or behavior finds it offensive. (Remainder omitted)

Let us create an academic, research, and work environment that can eradicate harassment and fully nurture the individuality and abilities of our diverse members. ↓

http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/en/guide/student/prevention_sh/index.html

Column Message from a counselor

Of the different kinds of harassment, I think that problems related to sexual harassment in particular can go unaddressed due to differences in understanding. Consider for example the following situation: A junior colleague says, “I’m going on my honeymoon”, to which another colleague responds, “It’s a good chance to make children”. The junior says, “That’s describing it too much”, but doesn’t seem to particularly mind. You overhear this conversation, and it makes you feel uncomfortable. You have a good relationship with your colleagues, and respect them. More than once, however, you felt that their sexual remarks about a third party or body contact went to far, and you left that place because you felt uncomfortable. If it just wasn’t for those words or actions, they would be a good colleague. What would you do in this situation? It can be difficult to say “No” to the behavior of people you are close to everyday. Other people don’t seem to mind, and it doesn’t involve me directly... maybe I’m being too sensitive? Maybe it is normal in their culture”. Although the words or actions bother you, you try to interpret them in a positive light. You might have asked other people around you who blamed you for being too sensitive, saying things like “Well, they’re just that kind of person”. In order to maintain a good relationship, or because of the fear of being disliked by others, many times we say nothing. Even if they don’t involve you directly, the things you see or hear can become a kind of environmental sexual harassment. By talking to someone completely uninvolved, sometimes you can notice problems that had become invisible because you were too close. Or what saying that you felt uncomfortable became a denial of the other person’s identity? Are you able to say, “That remark is inappropriate” to another person? We may have a tendency to hesitate when commenting on sexual words or actions. If we take some time to stop and think about it, we may be able to realize something we had missed before.

Osaka University Harassment Counseling Office

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